

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 STATE 168375  
ORIGIN SS-25

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DRAFTED BY TEXT RECEIVED FROM WHITE HOUSE  
APPROVED BY NEA:SSOBER  
S/S - O:A.OTTO

-----120440 192213Z /72-61

O 192155Z JUL 77  
FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 168375

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IR

SUBJECT: LETTER FROM PRESIDENT CARTER TO THE SHAH

1. YOU SHOULD PASS TO THE SHAH FOLLOWING MESSAGE FROM  
PRESIDENT CARTER DATED JULY 15. SIGNED ORIGINAL WILL BE  
POUCHED.

"YOUR IMPERIAL MAJESTY:

"THANK YOU FOR YOUR LETTER OF JUNE 8, 1977, CONCERNING  
YOUR FUTURE AIRCRAFT NEEDS. I VALUE OUR CORRESPONDENCE,  
FOR IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE MAINTAIN OUR CLOSE TIES  
THROUGH A FULL AND FRANK EXCHANGE ON MATTERS OF MUTUAL  
CONCERN. A STRONG AND RAPIDLY DEVELOPING IRAN IS  
IMPORTANT TO AMERICAN NATIONAL INTERESTS.

"THERE ARE A NUMBER OF CONSIDERATIONS RAISED BY YOUR  
REQUEST WHICH I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOU. FIRST, I  
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UNDERSTAND THE PRICING AND DELIVERY CONCERNS WHICH LED  
YOU TO REQUEST AN ACCELERATION OF THE SCHEDULED DELIVERY  
RATE OF F-16 AIRCRAFT FROM FOUR PER MONTH TO EIGHT PER  
MONTH BEGINNING IN 1980. HOWEVER, CONSIDERING OTHER U.S.  
COMMITMENTS, PRODUCTION CAPACITY FOR THE F-16 DURING THE  
FIRST SEVERAL YEARS WILL NOT SUSTAIN THIS RATE OF

DELIVERY TO IRAN. CONSEQUENTLY, INITIAL DELIVERY DATES OF ADDITIONAL F-16S WOULD NECESSARILY HAVE TO BE POSTPONED BEYOND THE PERIOD YOU HAVE SUGGESTED.

"SECOND, I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOU MY OWN EVALUATION OF THE BROADER POLICY IMPLICATIONS OF YOUR REQUEST. I VIEW THE SECURITY RELATIONSHIP WHICH HAS DEVELOPED BETWEEN OUR TWO NATIONS AS AN EXPRESSION OF THE STRONG TIES AND MUTUAL INTERESTS WHICH UNDERLIE THE BASIC POLICIES OF THE UNITED STATES AND IRAN. I STRONGLY SUPPORT THIS RELATIONSHIP AND INTEND, FOR MY PART, TO PRESERVE AND STRENGTHEN IT. SINCE BECOMING PRESIDENT, I HAVE APPROVED THE SALE OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO IRAN WHICH, IN TOTAL DOLLAR VOLUME, IS GREATER BY HALF THAN THAT APPROVED FOR ANY OTHER NATION IN THE WORLD.

"AT THE SAME TIME, AS YOU ARE AWARE, I HAVE ADOPTED A POLICY OF RESTRAINT IN THE SALE OF U.S. MILITARY EQUIPMENT ABROAD AS PART OF A BROADER PROGRAM TO REDUCE ARMS BUILDUPS AROUND THE WORLD. I AM FRANKLY CONCERNED THAT THE IMPACT OF ANOTHER MAJOR SALE OF THE MAGNITUDE OF THE 140 F-16S WOULD SERIOUSLY UNDERMINE THOSE EFFORTS AND COULD, IN FACT, BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE TO THE LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIP WHICH BOTH OF US WISH TO MAINTAIN. SPECIFICALLY, THERE IS THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF ANOTHER MAJOR SALE NOW, WHEN THE CONFIDENTIAL

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AWACS PROGRAM IS BEING ACTIVELY DEBATED IN THE CONGRESS, COULD JEOPARDIZE BOTH OF THESE PROPOSALS. FOR THAT REASON, I BELIEVE IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO PROCEED WITH A LETTER OF OFFER ON THE 140 AIRCRAFT AT THIS TIME.

"IN ADDITION, AS YOU KNOW, IT IS MY INTENTION TO REDUCE THE LEVEL OF ARMS SALES IN SUBSEQUENT YEARS BELOW THE 1977 LEVEL. THIS WILL NECESSARILY REQUIRE CAREFUL MANAGEMENT OF APPROVED SALES IN THE FUTURE. HOWEVER, IF APPROACHED IN THE SPIRIT OF MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION WHICH UNDERLIES THE RELATIONSHIP OF OUR TWO COUNTRIES, I BELIEVE THIS OBJECTIVE CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED IN A MANNER FULLY CONSISTENT WITH IRANIAN SECURITY NEEDS.

"IN THE LIGHT OF THESE CONSIDERATIONS, I WISH TO ASSURE YOU THAT YOUR INTEREST IN ACQUIRING ADDITIONAL F-16 FIGHTERS IS VIEWED SYMPATHETICALLY BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, AND I EXPECT TO BE ABLE TO GIVE YOU A MORE SPECIFIC RESPONSE IN ABOUT TWO OR THREE WEEKS.

"I ALSO HOPE THAT DURING OUR MEETING THIS FALL WE WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW IN GREATER DETAIL THE

POLITICAL AND STRATEGIC SITUATION AS IT AFFECTS THE  
RELATIONS OF OUR TWO COUNTRIES.

"MRS. CARTER AND I WERE DELIGHTED TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY  
TO MEET WITH HER IMPERIAL MAJESTY DURING HER VISIT TO  
WASHINGTON. THE IRANIAN PEOPLE COULD NOT HAVE A MORE  
GRACIOUS OR TALENTED REPRESENTATIVE. MY WIFE AND I  
REGRET THAT OUR MEETING WITH THE SHAHBANOU HAD TO BE SO  
BRIEF, AND WE LOOK FORWARD WITH ANTICIPATION TO YOUR  
VISIT IN NOVEMBER. SINCERELY, JIMMY CARTER." VANCE

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## Message Attributes

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**Capture Date:** 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** MILITARY AIRCRAFT, MILITARY SALES, DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATIONS  
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**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Sent Date:** 19-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am  
**Decaption Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
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**Errors:** N/A  
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**Original Handling Restrictions:** EXDIS  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
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**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** LETTER FROM PRESIDENT CARTER TO THE SHAH  
**TAGS:** PFOR, PPDC, MASS, US, IR, (CARTER, JIMMY), (PAHLAVI, MOHAMMAD REZA)  
**To:** TEHRAN  
**Type:** TE  
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